



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

Cherokee National Forest

2800 Ocoee Street N.

Cleveland, TN 37312

Web: <http://fs.usda.gov/cherokee>

News Release



Media Contact: Terry McDonald
(423) 476-9729

South Cherokee National Forest Reopening

Areas closed for Hurricane Irma to reopen soon.

CLEVELAND, TENN – September 12, 2017... USDA Forest Service officials will reopen all developed recreation areas still within their planned operating season, dispersed use areas, day-use sites and the Ocoee Whitewater Center in the south Cherokee National Forest on Wednesday, September 13. These areas were closed at noon on September 11 in preparation for Hurricane Irma.

Forest Service personnel are assessing areas throughout the Cherokee National Forest and have found no major damage. There are some occurrences of single trees and large limbs across roads and other areas that crews are cutting out. Trails in the 650,000 acre national forest have not been assessed and Forest Service officials say hikers should expect downed trees and limbs along trails especially at the higher elevations.

Cherokee Forest Supervisor JaSal Morris said, "Fortunately we are not seeing significant impacts from the storm to our developed recreation areas. Crews will continue to assess outlying roads and the more remote areas of the national forest. We are reopening areas that were closed Monday as soon as possible. National forest visitor and employee safety is priority one."

Even with the passing of Hurricane Irma national forest visitors should continue to take necessary precautions and be aware of the potential for rising water and falling trees and limbs. Low laying areas are especially vulnerable to rapidly rising and swift water. These areas should be avoided during and after major storm events. For outdoor safety information visit online: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r8/home/?cid=fsbdev3_066387

-More-

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.



Page 2

Campsite reservations may once again be made on line: <http://www.recreation.gov> or by calling 877.444.6777. For information about Cherokee National Forest and campground operational seasons visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/cherokee/>

For more information contact the following Cherokee National Forest Offices:

- Forest Supervisor's Office – Cleveland: 423-476-9700
- Ocoee Ranger District – Benton: 423-338-3300
- Tellico Ranger District – Tellico Plains: 423-253-8400
- Unaka Ranger District – Greeneville: 423-638-4109
- Watauga Ranger District – Unicoi: 423-735-1500

-USDA-